

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Docket No. 8875

Investigation into the possibility of adding an additional seat representing the interests of towns and regional planning organizations to the Vermont System Planning Committee	
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Order entered: 6/13/2018

ORDER RE CHANGES TO THE VERMONT SYSTEM PLANNING COMMITTEE

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's Order, the Vermont Public Utility Commission ("Commission") approves amendments to the Vermont System Planning Committee Memorandum of Understanding ("VSPC MOU") that allow the addition of a new member for the purpose of representing the interests of towns and regional planning organizations.

In order to ensure that a complete, integrated version of the VSPC MOU is maintained, we require the VSPC to file with the Commission by June 20, 2018, in this Docket, a "clean" version of the VSPC MOU that reflects the approved amendments.

II. BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The VSPC was established by the Commission in Docket 7081 to promote public engagement, long-term planning, and effective collaboration in addressing Vermont's electrical transmission needs. In particular, the VSPC serves to enable the timely identification of future transmission needs and address these needs by considering cost-effective non-transmission alternatives such as efficiency and distributed generation. The VSPC structure and purpose are set forth in an MOU, most recently approved by the Commission in its November 6, 2013, Order in Docket 8073.¹

¹ The initial MOU establishing the VSPC was approved by the Commission in its June 20, 2007, Order in Docket 7081. This MOU has been subsequently amended with the approval of the Commission. The version approved by the Commission in the November 6, 2013, Order in Docket 8073 reflects the cumulative changes approved by the Commission and is what we refer to here as the VSPC MOU.

To help promote public engagement in this process and ensure that the interests of residential, environmental, and commercial/industrial users of electricity are appropriately represented, the VSPC includes three public members representing each of these categories.²

In a December 27, 2016, Order, the Commission opened this proceeding to investigate the possibility of amending the VSPC MOU to add an additional seat to represent the interests of towns and regional planning organizations. In the December 27 Order, the Commission observed that the passage of Act 174 of 2016 had significantly increased the roles and responsibilities of municipal and regional planning entities in the planning process for the development of Vermont's electricity infrastructure. In light of this expanded role, the Commission requested comment on whether it would be appropriate to add a new public member to the VSPC to ensure that these elements are represented in the VSPC planning process.

The comments filed by the Windham Regional Commission ("WRC") and the VSPC in response to the December 27 Order agreed that the addition of a new member to represent town and regional planning organizations would provide a benefit to the functioning of the VSPC. The VSPC also made several suggestions as to how this new member could be incorporated into the VSPC's existing charter.

In a January 25, 2018, Order, the Commission found that the addition of this new member would be beneficial and adopted the VSPC proposal as to how this new member could be incorporated into the VSPC's existing charter. In the January 25 Order, the Commission directed the VSPC to file proposed amendments to the VSPC MOU to effect its proposal. The Commission also provided other parties with the opportunity to provide any comments on the proposed amendments.

On February 9, 2018, the VSPC filed proposed amendments to the VSPC MOU to effect the addition of the new member to represent town and regional planning organizations. The VSPC stated that it had polled electronically the VSPC voting representatives and represented that every sector supported the proposed amendments.

On March 13, 2018, WRC filed comments supporting the proposed amendments to the VSPC MOU. WRC also noted that the initial recommendations filed by the VSPC suggested

² Although not specifically spelled out in the VSPC MOU, the Commission has also selected three alternate public members to serve in the event that the principal representatives are not available.

that the VSPC have a representative of one of the three regional planning commissions that took part in recent pilot energy planning studies. The WRC recommends that the Commission and the VPSC not limit consideration of the new member to the three pilot regional planning commissions because at “this point all regional planning commissions are well on their way to having their draft regional energy plans going to public hearing and subsequent adoption,” and have “substantial engagement in energy generation and transmission project review.”

No other comments were received.

III. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We approve the amendments to the VSPC MOU that allow the addition of a new member for the purpose of representing the interests of towns and regional planning organizations. In order to ensure that a complete, integrated version of the VSPC MOU is maintained, we require the VSPC to file with the Commission by June 20, 2018, in this Docket, a “clean” version of the VSPC MOU that reflects the approved amendments.

With regard to WRC’s comments concerning the selection of the new VSPC member, we agree that consideration of the new member should not be limited to the three pilot regional planning commissions because all the regional planning commissions have substantial engagement in energy generation and transmission project review. The proposed amendments to the VSPC MOU do not limit this consideration. Accordingly, the selection process for a new member will include consideration of applicants from any regional planning commission.

In addition, in a separate proceeding, as recommended by the VSPC, we will conduct a broad solicitation for appropriate representatives of the new position.

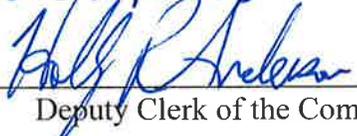
SO ORDERED.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont this 13th day of June, 2018.

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Anthony Z. Roisman)	PUBLIC UTILITY
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Margaret Cheney)	COMMISSION
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Sarah Hofmann)	OF VERMONT

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: June 13, 2018

Attest: 
 Deputy Clerk of the Commission

Notice to Readers: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Commission (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: puc.clerk@vermont.gov)

Appeal of this decision to the Supreme Court of Vermont must be filed with the Clerk of the Commission within 30 days. Appeal will not stay the effect of this Order, absent further order by this Commission or appropriate action by the Supreme Court of Vermont. Motions for reconsideration or stay, if any, must be filed with the Clerk of the Commission within 28 days of the date of this decision and Order.